

Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
Full Council Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2022

Members Present

Scott Lindbloom, Chair
Dave Cheesman
Lisa Livesay
Ceci Hartke
Judith Castro
Diana Meza
Kristen Mackey

Members Absent

Adam Robson
Paula Seanez
Melissa Wojtak
Twyla Bowman

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Crystal Poetz
Linda Fischer
David Carey
Jami Parente
Miya Whitaker
Karla Martin

Call to Order and Introductions

Scott Lindbloom, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of November 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Scott Lindbloom moved to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2021 SRC Full Council meeting. Lisa Livesay seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

SRC Chairperson's Report

Scott Lindbloom stated that he would be moving to Colorado, and this would be his last meeting as the Chair of the SRC. Mr. Lindbloom stated there would be a 1.5 billion cut to the education budget in Arizona, and he was unsure whether that would affect special education. Scott Lindbloom stated that he would continue to work with Navajo and Apache Counties while living in Colorado. He noted that he would also be on the

Supreme Court Commission in Colorado, which aligned with his background working with the Arizona Disability of Law center.

SRC Officer Elections

Scott Lindbloom stated that he spoke to Lisa Livesay regarding her interest in becoming the new SRC Chair, and she indicated that she would be interested. Lisa Livesay stated that she would be honored to serve as the SRC Chair unless any other members were interested in the position. Scott Lindbloom inquired whether any council members would be interested in becoming the Vice Chair of the council. Lisa Livesay suggested the council wait until more members were present to hold elections for the Vice Chair position. Scott Lindbloom stated that he would not be the Chair of the Employment and Community Partnerships Committee and another council member would need to assume that position.

Scott Lindbloom motioned that Lisa Livesay be elected as the SRC Chair. Ceci Hartke seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

RSA Administrator's Report

Kristen Mackey stated that Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) remained cautious regarding COVID and there was no timeline for staff to return to the office. Scott Lindbloom stated that some individuals had difficulties calling an RSA office and inquired whether individuals could receive computers to communicate with RSA staff. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA could not provide computers to non-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients, although individuals could call an RSA office or meet with staff as needed. Judith Castro stated that One Stop locations also offered computer classes for individuals needing basic computer skills. Scott Lindbloom noted that many individuals in Show Low were not aware of the One Stop locations. Kristen Mackey stated that VR staff would go to the One Stop locations itinerantly, although the VR offices could consider offering more promotional materials about the One Stop locations. Ms. Mackey stated that RSA continued to review and reduce office capacities as appropriate, while adding hoteling space for staff that needed to go into the office. Kristen Mackey stated that she continued to encourage staff to "think outside of the office" and to meet clients in the community when staff and clients were comfortable doing so. Kristen Mackey stated the Department of Economic Security (DES) was transitioning from Office 365 to Google. She noted there were some accessibility issues with Google, and RSA might consider making exceptions as necessary when working with external partners.

Kristen Mackey stated the number of VR referrals compared monthly was down 18%, and compared by year, they were up 2%. Ms. Mackey stated the eligibility rating was down about 3% monthly and was up about 2% yearly. Kristen Mackey stated the number of IPE plans were down about 18% monthly and was -5% yearly. Kristen Mackey stated there were almost 11,000 individuals in the VR program currently, which was low for AZ VR. Scott Lindbloom inquired regarding the VR referrals in Navajo County. Kristen Mackey stated the VR referral data was not separated by county. Linda Fischer inquired regarding the type of employment that individuals were obtaining. Kristen Mackey stated that many individuals were obtaining customer service jobs,

although the data did not specify the type of job such as retail. Lisa Livesay inquired whether RSA had reviewed the multi-year trends, comparing data prior to the pandemic. Kristen Mackey stated the number of VR referrals in 2019, 10,768; in 2020, there were 9,297; in 2021, there were 1,592. David Carey inquired whether staff would continue to work remotely. Kristen Mackey stated she did not envision that all staff would return to work in the office full time. Ms. Mackey noted that offices would likely be open for walk in customers in the future, and staff would have a hybrid schedule. Kristen Mackey stated that in downsizing office space, RSA was now able to recycle those funds towards technology and equipment for staff to work remotely. Kristen Mackey stated the budget had not been finalized, although there was concern with being able to spend the grant funds within a year. Kristen Mackey stated that 177,000 million was returned from VR agencies nationally, and RSA had requested a waiver for a no-cost extension, which had not been granted yet. Scott Lindbloom stated that VR and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) were combined in Colorado and inquired whether the agencies could be combined in Arizona to help expend those funds. Kristen Mackey stated Colorado had an Employment First agency, and Legislation that allowed those entities to work together, which Arizona did not have. Kristen Mackey stated that Arizona had a 4-year State Plan, which would be updated in year 2, to ensure that plan was still applicable. Kristen Mackey stated that RSA did not expect any negative or positive impacts from the proposed budget thus far.

Crystal Poetz stated the Ombudsman Office would be offering a training on March 24th for staff to learn more about the hearings and mediation process. Kristen Mackey stated that many staff members were not familiar with the mediation process, and Mathew Nevarez started the information workshops to assist staff with navigating those processes. Lisa Livesay inquired whether RSA had tracked the overall outcomes from the trainings. Kristen Mackey stated there were fewer appeals and hearings overall, and Mathew Nevarez tracked the types of requests and presented those findings to the Leadership Team. Linda Fischer inquired whether Crystal Poetz would be attending the mediation hearings. Crystal Poetz stated that she would be attending mediation hearings when Mathew Nevarez felt she was ready. Linda Fischer stated that clients did appreciate when VR's willingness staff to provide to support that process.

Jami Parente stated the RSA Policy Unit had recently updated the RSA Policy Manual and tracked any gaps if staff were not able to locate information in a policy. Ms. Parente stated the Policy Unit also kept track of the types of questions received, placed them under categories, and reported them quarterly. Jami Parente noted the Policy Unit received many questions regarding Post-Secondary Education and Training, for example, and tracked the number of questions received quarterly and yearly. Jami Parente stated the Office of Professional Development (OPD) was in the process of developing a Computer Based Training (CBT) to assist staff in navigating the Policy Manual. Jami Parente stated the projects for 2022 would be to convert the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Manual, develop a Self-Employment CBT, and develop Post-Secondary Training for staff. Lisa Livesay stated the benefit to breaking down the questions into categories to get a better understanding of the types of questions that staff had. Jami Parente agreed and noted the Policy Unit worked with the Ombudsman Office also to identify the types of questions that staff had regarding policies. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the Policy Unit had any plans to change how the data was structured. Jami Parente stated the data would continue to be reported quarterly until no more questions

were submitted to the Policy Unit inbox. She added that the Policy Manual would be formatted to comply with DES formatting standards.

SRC Member Manual Updates

Lindsey Powers stated she updated the SRC Member Manual for overall clarity and understanding. Ms. Powers stated that she updated the Committee descriptions to match the scope and activities of the committees more accurately. She stated that she also included footnotes with references for Open Meeting Law and Rosenberg's Rules of Order if any council members needed more information in those sections. Lindsey Powers stated she added some additional resources and changed some of the formatting for overall flow. Lindsey Powers stated that if any council member had any suggestions for additions to the Member Manual, she would be happy to include that information.

Committee Updates

Employment and Community Partnerships

Judith Castro stated the committee invited Michael Leyva, Developmental Disability Planning Council, to discuss training for staff to assist their clients in developing self-employment plans. Ms. Castro stated the committee had discussed potentially developing a webpage with a list of resources if it could be easily managed. Dave Cheesman stated the committee had discussed potentially creating a webpage under the DES or RSA website, where it could be easily accessed by anyone. Lisa Livesay inquired whether the committee had reviewed similar information from other states to see how other agencies shared that information. Judith Castro stated the committee was still in the planning phase and had not decided how to share the information. She noted that Michael Leyva had assisted the Yuma office in training staff, and the committee was interested in potentially providing training to other VR offices. Judith Castro suggested that any council members that were not currently participating on a committee consider joining a committee.

Program Review

Lisa Livesay stated that she would not be able to continue as Chair of the Program Review Committee once she assumed the role of the SRC Chair. Ms. Livesay stated the committee invited Abel Young, Statewide Transition Coordinator, to provide additional information regarding the committee's questions regarding the Transition Program. Lisa Livesay stated that Abel Young indicated there were over 400 requests for Transition workshops in the past year, in which the most requested were for job exploration, and the least requested were for work-based learning. Lisa Livesay noted the most requests came from Pima County and the least came from Apache and Navajo Counties. Lisa Livesay stated that larger school districts had a lot more restrictions and policies regarding who could provide Transition services to students on campuses. She noted that many schools were not allowing Transition Specialists to provide services on campus, which she had brought to the ADE, to explore options for technical assistance to those schools. Lisa Livesay stated there were official Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) training to staff as well as outreach to students. She noted that Abel Young did indicate that many students preferred to meet in person and did not want to

meet with staff virtually. Lisa Livesay stated the RSA Core training had been updated recently, and staff were able to attend training and then obtain support from their supervisors as well. Ms. Livesay stated the committee had discussed potentially reviewing the redacted comments from hearings and appeals, and possibly offering suggestions. She added that the committee had discussed following up regarding any new policies, reviewing any trend data, and/or staff training. Scott Lindbloom suggested the committee track how a cut to the education budget could affect the Transition program. Lisa Livesay stated that would be out of the scope of the committee, although the committee could provide support to RSA, if the budget cuts affected any VR programs.

Executive Committee

Lisa Livesay stated the Executive Committee had discussed how VR could partner with SILC and noted that Ms. Mackey had indicated that would require a Legislative change. Ms. Livesay stated the committee could, however, explore current partnerships with VR. Scott Lindbloom suggested the committee partner with the Chamber of Commerce, which would have relationships with employers.

ADE Updates

Lisa Livesay stated one of the 5 core priorities of ADE was strategic funding, and pro-actively addressing any potential budget cuts. Lisa Livesay stated that she worked with the Exceptional Students Special Projects Unit, which provided technical assistance and Best Practices for community partners. She noted the ADE would be offering an Early Intervention and Early Special Education Summit at the end of February, which would discuss inclusivity and universal design. She added the IDEA Conference would be held in person in September at the JW Marriot Desert Ridge, and more information would be available on the website. Lisa Livesay stated that her team was offering technical assistance and training through the Transition Tuesdays, where staff met for an hour and answered questions from attendees. Lisa Livesay stated the training discussed topics such as Employment First and competitive integrated employment and would discuss topics such as how to navigate DDD or how to support students with behavioral and mental health. Ms. Livesay stated the ADE continued to expand connections and to support families, students, and the community.

Membership Organization Updates

SILC

David Carey stated that SILC continued to offer monthly emergency preparedness webinars and invited speakers from different disability populations to present. David Carey stated that SILC continued to serve consumers remotely to keep individuals safe during the pandemic. Mr. Carey stated SILC collaborated with critical partners to develop and provide services to consumers. David Carey stated that Melissa Santora had retired, and the new Director would be announced soon. Scott Lindbloom inquired how SILC provided Emergency Preparedness services. David Carey stated all presentations were provided remotely.

Client Assistance Program

Linda Fischer stated that CAP had hired a new CAP advocate. She added that CAP was in the process of updating the self-advocacy guides and creating the materials in alternate formats that would be accessible.

Agenda Items and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SRC Full Council will be on May 12, 2022 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm and agenda items would include:

- SRC Membership Discussion
- Officer Elections

Announcements

Scott Lindbloom stated that he would miss the SRC, although Lisa Livesay would be great as the SRC Chair. The council thanked Scott Lindbloom for his leadership and participation on the council and wished him the best.

Public Comment

A call to the public was made with no response forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Scott Lindbloom motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Livesay seconded the motion. The meeting stood adjourned at 3:42 pm.